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CHAL-0499 ✓

Copy 6 of 6

12 March 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Chief, Development Projects Division

SUBJECT : Conversation with Kelly Johnson Concerning Development Flight Testing

REFERENCES : A. [REDACTED] (IN 05634)
25X1 B. Memorandum for DD/P, from Contracting Officer,
dated 9 March 1959, subject "Discussions with
C. L. Johnson on 4 March 1959" (DPD-1459-59)

1. In the course of a conversation with Mr. Kiefer and myself on
10 March, Kelly Johnson did bring up the subject of the referenced cable from
[REDACTED] He referred to this matter only rather late in the conver-
sation and in a good-humored fashion; I felt that he was not in a state of mind
25X1 to make any major issue concerning it.

2. His statement was that [REDACTED] had suggested that
some of the flight testing of the modified U-2 with the J-75 engine might be
done by Project or EAFB personnel, also that [REDACTED] had proposed
to bring certain Air Force officers at Edwards into the flight test program for
purposes Kelly did not make entirely clear to me. He reminded me of an
agreement between us dating back to the early part of the U-2 program that
development flight testing is a responsibility of the contractor. I might say
that my interpretation of this agreement which I believe to be consistent with
Kelly's is that development flight testing includes the flight testing of any and
all modifications to airframe, power plant or other equipment in which either
(a) flight safety may be involved or (b) the testing requires that the aircraft
be flown by highly professional test pilots. This definition excludes production
flight testing of payloads which has often been done by Project personnel.

25X1 3. I told Kelly that I had been advised of his conversation with
[REDACTED] but was unaware that the issue of responsibility for production
flight testing had been raised. I reaffirmed the above agreement with him.
I also stated, however, that I expected [REDACTED] to monitor closely

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SECRET

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- 2 -

25X1 the progress of production flight testing and to make any suggestions or recommendations that occurred to him for improving flight test procedures and programs or for reducing their costs. I emphasized that I had encouraged [redacted] to make suggestions in the first instance directly to the contractor rather than through this Headquarters. Kelly appeared entirely satisfied with these views.

4. In this part of the conversation we touched on the related topic referred to in reference B of procedures for approving engineering changes and tests thereof. I said I was aware of Colonel Brewer's desires in this matter and of the engineering change procedure document Brewer had presented to Kelly. Kelly replied that it would be entirely satisfactory to have Lockheed act in accordance with this procedure in changes undertaken for us but that basically our requirements were similar. I then reaffirmed our long-standing agreement that (a) any change of test program must be authorized by us, (b) there should be a clear understanding that oral authorization in conversation or by telephone would be permitted whenever desirable in the interest of speed and flexibility, but (c) that there should, however, be some exchange of communications whether on the standard form developed by Colonel Brewer or more simply in a letter, to confirm the contractor's cost estimate and our authorization to proceed for every such program including those authorized orally. Kelly expressed himself as wholly satisfied with this method of doing business. I have mentioned this point in conjunction with that referred to in paragraphs 2. and 3. above in order to indicate that Kelly is well aware of the need for an orderly procedure on this matter. He volunteered that in his view things had been getting out of hand in that his own subordinates had been carrying out changes without either our authorization or his. I feel, therefore, that the air has completely cleared on this problem that has somewhat bothered me in the past few months.

5. In the course of this discussion of procedures I volunteered that I felt we must re-establish a single point of approval within DPD for new undertakings by contractors involving significant expenditure of funds. I reminded Kelly that for a number of years the understanding had been that [redacted] was focal point for all such approvals but that with the separation of the Contracting Officer's responsibility from [redacted] the locus of responsibility might have become blurred. I also pointed out that even when I spent much time in an office next to [redacted] I personally

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- 3 -

had caused enough confusion by approving actions orally and omitting to notify my colleagues and that the greater remoteness of my present office could render my irresponsibility even more troublesome to all concerned. Accordingly, I told Kelly that I believed we should re-establish our Contracting Officer as the focal point for oral or written approvals but that this would either be confirmed to him or we would advise him, if on further reflection, we desired to make a different arrangement. This matter should receive our prompt attention. I hope to discuss it with [redacted] in the immediate future and with the staff at the regular Staff Meeting on 17 March.

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(sgs) Richard M. Bissell, Jr.
RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Deputy Director
(Plans)

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